

Amateur Cup detour

en route to final!

THERE'LL be no easy route to Wembley this season. But it must be tough and go as to whether Wycombe Wanderers can even survive the detour of an F.A. Amateur Cup round two replay at Sandy Lane next Saturday.

Despite punishing pressure on the visitors' goal late in Saturday's tie, they failed to break Tooting's resistance and must now concede ground advantage to a big side favoured far more by the heavy state of the Loakes Park pitch.

Wanderers need have no special qualms about the second meeting, however. Geoff Anthony (on duty for Wales at Ballymena) and John Delaney (suffering from tonsillitis) should both be back in the next seven days; and these two factors alone will re-boost their confidence.

But perhaps the key to the pending replay lies in Wycombe's impressive record away from home since August. They have already drawn (a dull, goalless encounter) at Tooting, and have been beaten only once (at St. Albans) in 13 Isthmian League excursions.

The excitement level in the opening five minutes on Satur-

day exceeded that reached at any stage of the team's first meeting.

After just two minutes, Keith Searle and Viv Busby combined to force a timely save from Tooting's Norman Stanley, whom many around South London are tipping for an England 'cap' in the near future.

The visitors enjoyed the first of several 'let-offs', when Tony Horseman shot the ball against a post five minutes later.

Tooting have an international-class defensive display from centre-half Allan Phillips to thank for their continued interest in the competition.

Phillips, selected like Anthony

to represent Wales against Northern Ireland, made a late choice to stay home and play for his club — when he found that business commitments prevented him from travelling with the Welsh team on Thursday.

His decision swung the whole tie.

Between Phillips, and Peter Gaydon, who kept a tight rein on Searle's activities, they held the Tooting backrow together, and, in so doing, laid the foundations for their side to mount a serious second-half offensive.

By mid first period, the suggestion of deadlock was clear. John Maskell's desperate lunge at Ken Jelly's feet stopped

a 24th-minute Tooting breakthrough and laid the Wanderers' goalkeeper out for several seconds before treatment from trainer Jocy Sheppard revived him.

Three minutes later Maskell again saved the situation by holding Webb's header on the goalline. Even so, the most dangerous moments always came at Tooting's end.

Something had to give when Busby crossed inside and Searle and Phillips both recklessly slid legs first into a tackle after 39 minutes. But only the ball felt the full force and it went flying high for a corner.

Delaney's absence was well covered by Wanderers' surplus

strength in defence, and mid-field. It did have an effect, however: Keith Blunt moved to left-half instead of the right-wing position vacated by Anthony.

Busby, whom one suspects would have been sitting it out on the touchline as substitute had it not been for the reshuffle, made a greater contribution than might have been expected in the mud-laden conditions.

Switching wing early with Johnny Hutchinson, Viv constantly beat Tooting right-back Brian Feeney for speed and wit.

Feeney's partner, Ken Baker, headed away a Suddaby effort in the 52nd minute, yet it was Tooting who made the running after half-time.

With Wycombe coming under more pressure than they have for any period in recent games, the way was open for someone to rise to the occasion. Sure enough, that someone emerged in the burly shape of Charlie Gale.

Wallowing in the conditions like a mudlark, Charlie kneeed the ball out of play after Gaydon had rounded Maskell to slot in a 55th-minute shot; and generally gave a faultless performance.

It took some concerted football to offset Tooting's push, but by 20 minutes from time, Wycombe were back in control.

Tooting's woodwork thwarted Wanderers for a second time two minutes later, when Hutchinson went clear through the visitors' defences only to find a post with his 73rd-minute shot.

After a comparatively quiet time, Hutchinson suddenly roused himself. And the entire Wanderers' attack followed suit, as he forced two corners in four minutes.

Although Jelly hit back to test Maskell for the last time, if either side was to clinch a late victory, it would be Wanderers, and that was one privilege they never claimed.

At one moment the ball flew across the face of Tooting's goal and within seconds, Suddaby tried another header, this time kicked clear by Feeney, after it had rapped the post for a third time.

With five minutes to play, tragedy appeared to have struck Tooting when a sickening click could be heard following a collision between Harry Baker and David Burke.

The visitors' right-half writhed on the ground but thankfully, after treatment and massage on his leg, he was able to continue.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, C. Gale; J. Lailey, P. Suddaby, K. Blunt; V. Busby, P. Baker, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson. Sub: V. Faulkner (not used).

Tooting and Mitcham: N. Stanley; B. Feeney, K. Baker, D. Burke, A. Phillips, P. Gaydon, P. Webb, K. Jelly, D. Hutchings, W. Smith, C. Kelly. Sub: I. Meakin.

Attendance: 3,127. Gate receipts: £425 10s. 6d.



Mike Whitesman
at LOAKES PARK
Wycombe W. 0
Tooting & Mitch. 0

Wycombe, although a trifle unlucky, gave a fine display and at times looked unbeatable. They miss Delaney's captaincy. They were a bit out of Tooting and could easily win the replay. Tooting played well. Wycombe played well. Tooting very good. Sent most of his passes into the road. Winner of the match. Wycombe could well have lost with- He gave a competent display as captain.